5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
BANTU KAVIRONDO FL44

B 628

suffered an injury at the hands of certain other members of his clan, *e.g.*, has had his wife enticed away or had a cow stolen, he will often proceed to the territory of a neighbouring tribe and lie in ambush, attack and spear the first passer by, likely to fall an easy prey, and will then return home.

In a few days it will leak out that one of the "Wa-so and so" has done this, and the clan of the murdered man will up and wage war with the clan of the murderer, who hopes to obtain his revenge vicariously in this manner; latterly, it is said, it has been done in the hopes that the administration will be induced to punish the clan, and, incidentally, the man who has wronged him.

As a variant of the same line of conduct during the last few years, several cases of suicide have been brought to my notice.

B 762

For example, in Nyole district a young man one day had a violent quarrel with his own mother while cultivating, and eventually beat her with a stick. She ran crying to a village near by, and one of the elders came out and gave the young fellow a thrashing; to every one's astonishment the young man hanged himself that afternoon, and the people of the vicinity told my agent, who went to enquire into it, that he had committed suicide so that his blood relations might lay his death at the door of the elder, and thus start a blood feud against him. Word was, naturally, promptly sent forth that such a procedure would be strongly discouraged, and the incident apparently closed.

MISCELLANEOUS CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.

L 821

The Ja-Luo believe that the sun goes back to the east overhead during the night, hidden behind the heavens. They use the word *Chieng* indifferently for sun and the Deity. They do not associate the daylight sky with the light of the sun, but look upon it as something quite distinct, and asked what became of it at night. It is known by the term *Polo*. They professed the belief that Europeans were the children of the sun.

L 821 841

They believe that menstruation is caused by the new moon, and also that a woman can only become pregnant at the time of the new moon, and generally that the moon has a great deal to do with the occurrence.

During menstruation a woman does not cook food for others, but merely her own food. She performs all other work as usual.

L 372

The people have no ceremonies connected with fire, such as the extinguishing of all the fires at a certain time, and the relighting with certain rites.

B 845 846 833

Among the Awa-Wanga, many believe that within five or six days of the birth of a child the parents must cohabit, or the child will die. After the birth of twins, the parents are secluded for from twenty days to a month; at the end of the ordained period the brother of the man then formally opens the door of the hut and the couple can go about as usual. This seclusion of the male parent is probably an attenuated relic of the "*couvade*" custom.

584 the negotiations, which is partaken of in a hut, not outside. To this feast three or four friends of each side are invited as witnesses. When the beer drinking stage has been reached, the company sit round the [273] beer pot in a circle, and the provider of the feast takes the long hollow beer-sucker, puts the end provided with a strainer in the pot, takes a few sucks, and then hands it across to the other party with the invitation to drink if he agrees to a matrimonial alliance between the two families taking place. If the second party desires at the last moment [675] to withdraw he declines to drink, but once having accepted the invitation and completed the contract by drinking, it is as irrevocable as a contract can be. The children thus pledged to marry may be so young that the marriage can not take place for years, or the girl may be a child, while the other may be a man already married. The girl so pledged in this way is known in some parts, as in Asembo, as " nyar oseke," " the girl of the beer sucker," and the Luo have no stronger matrimonial contract. It is hedged about with potent penalties, 584 mainly magical, in case of any breach of the contract by either of the 789 parties pledged. But even this most binding of all binding contracts is not invariably kept. Occasionally a girl will not submit to the fate marked out for her, and if she can find a man brave enough to join his fortune with hers, they undergo a ceremony, the essential feature of which is the drinking of " medicine " called " manyasi." This is supposed to render harmless the evils which would otherwise befall them.

789 Women are by no means so helpless when bound to their husbands as many are inclined to believe. *In some ways* wives are in a stronger 593 position than are women in lands where magic is not believed in. Luo women have many weapons in their armoury, by which they can bring their husbands into subjection, or perhaps I ought to say, something like subjection. I cannot find that these weapons are resorted to frivolously. A woman has to be hard pushed to bring them into play. One of which we hear a good deal is a curse debarring cohabitation. It is very simple in operation. Striking her thigh with her open palm, the wife vows never to cohabit again. The striking of the thigh is essential. Once this is done dire penalties, sickness of himself and children, will result if the husband attempts to force consent. The fat is now truly in the fire, and the husband has to come to terms with his wife. When he has succeeded in mollifying her " manyasi," the medicine already mentioned, is drunk to break the curse. At this 241 stage of social development a belief in magic does serve the needs of ● 841 women in certain circumstances. She has powers in connection with agriculture which can be devastating. For instance, during her menses no woman must sow seed. In the family of a polygamist lesser wives dare not approach the " mikayi " or chief wife to share in the labour at this time. Such contact with the seed would prejudice the crop.

241 Similarly, during this time she must be careful where she walks. She
● 841 can ruin a crop by walking through it. But, of course, in this case, she would suffer with the other members of the family.

462 From early childhood the girl is brought up as an agricultural
787 labourer. There was no class of women divorced from the soil. The
791 only class whose labours in agriculture were lightened were the women who belonged to the divining cult of " SEWE." Sewe is the spirit of divination and is supposed to have descended on those who have been delirious in illness. The delirium is the sign of possession. The devotees of the cult are mainly women, and they are a fairly common sight as they go about their avocation. They are skilled beggars as
[301] well as diviners. With their bodies festooned with strings of beads, shells, bells and other barbaric ornaments, they pass from kraal to kraal, and standing with their bodies leaning forward supported by a
[431] hand resting on a short stick they sing songs of the countryside and and are rewarded by presents of small baskets of grain. In this way women who have been ill are enabled to help to replenish the grain stores, which have probably run low during the illness.

241 Gradually a change is coming over the life of the women, due to
177 white influence. Ploughing by the men with teams of oxen, is setting women free for other tasks. This movement is by no means wide-
252 spread, but it has begun, and its effect on the women has been great.
462 Even if the husband has no team and plough himself, many wives do not rest content until the husband has hired a plough owner to come along and plough up the land. It is not unusual for ploughs to be taken 15 miles for this purpose. Again, the use of hand mills of the " Colonist " type, is easing women of much labour at the grind stones. These are much more common than ploughs, probably there are twenty mills for every plough in use. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the mills are turned by hand power, not by oxen. At this labour girls and women take their share, but whereas you would never see a man down on his knees at the grindstone, you do see them turning a mill. New activities are employing the time of many women, and those who have learned to knit or make palm mats in recent years are rapidly increasing in numbers.

CHILD LABOUR:

857 Generally speaking, from early childhood, all are required to make some contribution to the activities of the home. Girls for the fields, and boys for herding, is the broad division of labour, though the boys also lend a hand in the fields, and, very occasionally, a girl or woman may be seen herding. With the opening up of
593 avenues of wage-earning to the boys on coffee and tea estates, and in
[464 other forms of employment, the male child is being made by impecuni-
651] ous parents to make his contribution to the family hut tax.